

**ARIZONA OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATING COMMISSION  
(AORCC)  
OF  
ARIZONA STATE PARKS (ASP)  
Offices of Arizona State Parks  
1300 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ  
March 20, 2008**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 1:pm. Ms. Shulman took the roll and announced that there was a quorum.

**Commission Members Present:**

Jeff Bell, Chair  
Mary Ellen Bittorf (*via telephone*)  
Ken Travous  
Devin Rankin  
Duane Shroufe (*via telephone*)

**Commission Members Absent:**

Rafael Payan  
William Schwind

**Arizona State Parks Staff:**

Jay Ream, Assistant Director, ASP  
Jay Ziemann, Assistant Director, ASP  
Doris Pulsifer, Chief of Grants  
Pat Dutrack, Grants Coordinator  
Vivia Strang, Grants Coordinator  
Ruth Shulman, Advisory Committee Coordinator

**Guests:**

Larry Voyles, Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD) (*via telephone*)

**B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Members and staff introduced themselves.

**C. ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Presentation, Purchase Proposal, and Discussion on Picket Post House.**

Assistant Director Jay Ream gave a PowerPoint presentation (available on request in hard copy) on the Picket Post House near the Boyce Thompson Arboretum.

This is a state park operated under a tripartite agreement among Arizona State Parks, the University of Arizona (UofA), and Boyce Thompson Inc (BTI). Mr. Ream said that the property has been on the Arizona State Park's acquisition list for almost 20 years. In the early 1980's the Arizona Legislature appropriated funds for the purchase, however those moneys went toward purchasing what is now Slide Rock State Park. At that time, the purchase price was set much higher than the appraised value of the property. However, they have recently offered a purchase price much more in line with the appraised value.

Colonel William Boyce Thompson built the house 1923-1928 so that he could view his growing botanical gardens, which were built by professional botanists and curators. The Arboretum sold the Picket Post House in 1949. The property consists of 32.9 acres. The Rose Family is offering the property at \$3.7 million, and ASP recently appraised the property at \$2.8 million. There is an additional appraisal showing a value of \$3 million structured over a multi-year purchase. This is based on the "raw land value". The property includes the main house, a guest house and a caretaker's house. The main house is three stories.

Mr. Ream said that ASP is interested in the property now because it is back on the market after a hiatus of ten years. The price and appraisal are at last close. The owner has parceled the property into three sections, one of which is the frontage road on the highway. It would be especially detrimental to the Arboretum if the frontage sold for retail development. The property is an in-holding surrounded by the Arboretum, and another 30 acres belonging to the UofA. This would result in an additional 60 contiguous acres rather than only the 32.09 acres for the property. The owners are currently providing tours of the house to the public for approximately \$10/per person a few days a week in the off-season. The tours would likely continue. Some ideas have been brainstormed for food service, retail and overnight stays on the acreage, however there are no firm plans currently. Mr. Ream noted that the Arboretum enjoys 65,000 visitors annually and the current operating budget is \$1.7 million with revenue of \$1.1 million. The Arboretum is therefore subsidized in the amount of \$600,000 annually.

Mr. Travous noted that AORCC was receiving this presentation and being asked for its support because of a "protocol" reached between AORCC and the ASP Board in the early 1990s. The protocol provides for ASP to receive 30% of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) disbursement from the Federal Government, and in return for that 30% ASP will not apply for grants for itself under the LRSP program. That program receives a disbursement of approximately \$3.5 million annually. However, the purchase of the Picket Post House will be an exception to the protocol and ASP is therefore looking for input from AORCC before taking this proposal to the ASP Board. This would be the first time ASP would be making a request to use funds from LRSP.

Mr. Shroufe recalled the protocol and the reasons for AORCC and the ASP Board for adopting it. He noted that the protocol did not contain a provision requiring AORCC's input in special cases such as the purchase of the Picket Post House.

Mr. Travous explained the acquisition mechanism. The funding source for this purchase would be Historic Preservation (HP) Heritage Funds and Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP) Heritage Funds. In each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009 ASP would use \$700,000 of the Historic Preservation Heritage Fund money toward the purchase. The FY2008 funds are currently in a "set-aside" status with the ASP Board, and have been since July 2007. The LRSP Heritage Funds will contribute a like amount for the same period of time, for a total of \$2.8 million from Historic Preservation and LRSP. The balance of each fund would then be available for grants for those two fiscal years. Additional funding would come from the ASP Acquisition and Development Heritage Funds for a total purchase price of \$3 million.

Chair Bell asked about the size of the "pot" for the HP Heritage Fund. Mr. Ziemann responded that HP receives \$1.7 million, approximately half of the LRSP disbursement. Chair Bell then asked whether ASP would need to compete for the funds it is requesting. Mr. Ziemann said that was the nature of the protocol developed in the early '90s. At that time, ASP would apply for grants under the LRSP program. However, there was a concern that ASP would "take all the money" and also that ASP's grant applications were being judged by a different standard than the applications of other parties. So, based on historic averages, the protocol established a regular "set-aside" for ASP from the LWCF program funds in return for ASP not putting in grant applications to the LRSP program. This would establish not only an even playing field, but also make it clear where ASP stood. Mr. Ziemann then reiterated that, in the event of any disagreement, the matter would go before the ASP Board as the final arbiter. The ASP Board would then be able to make an informed decision.

Chair Bell asked about the response from the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee to this proposal. Mr. Ream said that the group had some questions that he was unable to answer at the meeting, and they would meet again on Monday, March 31. He feels that the group is positive about the acquisition of the Picket Post House., as long as the HP Heritage Fund grant program is not completely disrupted. Mr. Ream also noted that ASP receives a set-aside from the HP Heritage Fund in the amount of \$150,000. This \$150,000 would be a part of the \$700,000 from the HP Heritage Fund. In this way, the two grant cycles currently available under the HP program could continue, though with less funding. Mr. Ream said that that HPAC has not determined whether or not it supports the acquisition, but he is meeting with them again at their March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Chair Bell asked whether the \$1.7 million HP Heritage Fund grant program is as oversubscribed as the LRSP Heritage Fund grant program. The LRSP program is highly competitive with many more applicants than can be funded. Mr. Ziemann

noted that the HP program is mostly subscribed to the limit, and occasionally oversubscribed. Ms. Pulsifer could supply exact figures.

Ms. Bittorf said that she very much supported the proposal to purchase the Picket Post House. She believes that the purchase is environmentally important because it's an important bird area, and also provides an open, natural space in the face of growth around Superior.

Mr. Travous said that given the proposal and other factors, he wanted to be sure to note that there was not a purchase contract in place for the property. Negotiations could fall through. Additionally, the Arizona State Legislature could "sweep" the Heritage Fund in response to the budget crisis making the money unavailable.

Chair Bell asked for a motion, and noted also that Commissioner Payan had sent a letter in support of the proposal. Ms. Bittorf moved that AORCC approve the proposed of the Picket Post House by Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park and Arizona State Parks. Mr. Shroufe seconded the motion. Chair Bell said he assumed that the motion would be forwarded to the Arizona State Parks Board for final approval. The motion carried with no further discussion.

#### **D. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

#### **E. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

#### **F. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

April 10, 2008 – Phoenix, Arizona State Parks offices

#### **G. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bell adjourned the meeting at 1:25pm.